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much less effective as a source of news than is the press. It was also found that the farther away from towns respondents live, the less information they get from friends and the more from newspapers: only for items of local news are friends everywhere more effective than newspapers as channels of communication. When a Tamil newspaper reaches a village it commonly circulates and is read aloud to a much larger number of people than one copy could reach in a town. The wide circulation of papers and the presence of well-educated men even in out-of-the-way villages helps explain the unusually high levels of knowledge about the world beyond the Nilgiris that Badagas now command.

NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION

Beside the traditional marriage and exchange networks which supplied Badagas with their basic needs, there have always been social networks through which important information has passed by word of mouth. These have been modified and amplified in the present century and have become linked to some extent with the mass media (on networks, see Hockings, 1977, *passim*).

In Hulla:da, a typical Badaga village, there are now four types of network: intra-village, inter-village, inter-tribal and a new type, village-and-town. Each of these categories can be subdivided according to the following outline.

Intra-Village Networks

There were in 1963 several different adult male *loci* for decision making and opinion formation. The most important here, as in nearly every village, were these:

(1) the traditional council, and especially the village headman;
(2) the festival committee;
(3) elders of the four indigenous lineages and of a fifth composite group of more recently settled families;
(4) three middle-aged, influential men;
(5) the local Swatantra Party organizer;
(6) the educated young men.

Two or three of these groupings may operate together in popularizing an idea or solving a problem that faces the village. In a class by

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themselves are the women's work-groups, small cliques of village wives who work together in the fields and elsewhere, exchanging gossip and favours in the process. These female networks link up with the male ones through the wives of influential men (cf. Plate 10).

The sequence of contacts that have to be made if someone in the village is to influence or be influenced by people in the above list constitutes an intra-village network.

Inter-Village Networks

Two kinds of network fall under this heading, one linking agnates, the second affines. The first are ritual and juridical networks, linking up with distantly related men in other villages of the commune. This commune was first settled, it is claimed, by a man who founded the maximal lineage to which nearly all of the inhabitants belong. Hulla:ḍa people mostly belong to one of the three major lineages, this one established by Koṅga Hetappa, one of the commune founder's three sons. Within Hulla:ḍa and a nearby village (Ke:ti) the lineage is further divided into four minimal lineages, each descended from one of Koṅga Etappa's four sons. The more important festivals are celebrated in common by all sixteen villages in the commune, using ritual personnel from any of these villages. Serious problems are discussed by all the village headmen at the commune council. Hulla:ḍa villagers can establish contact with the wealthiest and most influential men in the commune by activating these two networks, either through a village headman or through a friend who has helped in the rituals.

Secondly, the marriage and visiting networks link Hulla:ḍa with villages beyond this commune. Marriages account for a network of social contacts with nearly two dozen other villages, and these are frequently activated by informal visits and by attendance at the festivals, weddings and funerals of affines. Small loans may be sought along these networks (Hockings, in press).

Inter-Tribal Networks

The Badagas of Hulla:ḍa were linked for certain economic and ritual purposes with particular Kotas, Todas, Kurumbas and Chettis. For the most part these associations have fallen into

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clarified butter and sweet flag. All but the last two are grown in the plains and bought in the bazaar. Sweet flag is a Nilgiri plant the rhizome of which is dried. These items have to be mixed in particular proportions. The dried ginger is a rhizome one cm. thick; a piece one cm. long is used; also the same amount of sweet flag rhizome; four small pepper seeds; one teaspoonful of the small cumin seeds; three or four cloves; 1/2 cube of sugar; 1/2 teaspoonful of coffee powder; and two teaspoonfuls of clarified butter. Except for the butter, coffee, sugar, and cumin, these items are crushed on an open mortar with a metate-like stone roller. This object, about 20 cms. across, is called *maddare* or *matkallu*, and is used exclusively by Badaga therapists for grinding up medicines. An empty pot is put on the fire, and the cumin seeds roasted in it; when ready, they make a crackling sound. Then about two tumblers of water and the crude sugar are added, and after them the other ground items. As soon as the water boils the coffee powder is added; and when the liquid has half evaporated, it is filtered carefully through a piece of clean white cloth into a tumbler containing the clarified butter. When it has cooled a little this mixture is given to the woman to drink. After that her pains stop if the delivery is not really imminent; or else she has a quick delivery.

4.8. For a week or so before the expected birth the neighbours and other women of the girl's lineage keep an eye on her. When one of them has to go off to the fields to work she first calls to enquire about the health of the expectant woman. As soon as labour starts her parents send messages to all of the neighbouring houses, and also to her husband's house. The latter is supposed to pay the messengers who bring the news to him.

There is generally more than one midwife in each village. There are usually also some girls studying midwifery, so that as the years pass the younger women can take over from the old midwives. No male is allowed to be present at a Badaga birth. Any woman can be there, and generally women who know how to deliver a baby are asked to come, as are the girls who are learning midwifery. There is no rule that small girls should be excluded but they usually are because they may become afraid. For that same reason pregnant women are generally not allowed there. Women who are breast-feeding babies are also strongly advised not to come, since the strong smell may have a bad effect on both mother and child. Despite such warnings some brave nursing mothers may still come,

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761 789 sees who has shouted the news, some of his closer friends and relatives from that hamlet will immediately leave for his house, to pay respect to his corpse. A woman can resort to the same subterfuge only if she can find a man to make the dreadful pronouncement on her behalf. The process of misleading the mourning friends is supposed to prolong a person's life: it may also be done by relatives for an influential man who is indeed sick, but who they hope will be enabled to live longer by this process of cheating death. 763 This concern contrasts with the cynical treatment sometimes offered to dying people in the last century: "When a rich Badaga is very ill and the agony approaches all the relatives come and gather near him and see to it that he is well provided for his journey into the realm of the dead. For this end they make the dying man swallow two small gold pieces with butter... If the ill man does not die [761] very soon and the relatives think he lasts too long they give him opium in order to hasten his hour of death." (Mörike 1849: 102).

763 825 As mentioned above, the sight of two crows in congress is an omen of impending death. Other birds give similar information. If the forest eagle-owl (*Huhua nipalensis*) calls ²gu::₁ there will certainly be a death soon in the hamlet where it was heard: if it is already past the new moon, death will come before the full moon. Thus if anyone is sick in the hamlet closest to where this bird is heard, people know he will die; and if no one is sick, women nearing their delivery take special care. (Other kinds of cries made by the same bird indicate whether or not rain is coming.)

761 539 Nothing is more certain than death. As various Badaga proverbs put it: "If you live to six years you will die; if you live to a hundred years you will die"; "Even though you can escape at any time you cannot escape the time of death;" "You have paid up his padded account after seeing it; there is no sorrow when a man dies in old age"; "Even if all the [Nilgiri] divisions leave you, the burial ground won't leave you alone"; and again, "Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."

763 9.5. When an old person becomes sick and seems likely to die, he is given a separate bed even if he did not previously have one, and is treated with circumspection. Messages about his true condition are sent to a number of other Badaga hamlets where the dying man has relatives, inviting those people to visit him. Unless the 763 574 dying person is more than 40 such visitors are not invited, because [203] a much greater chance of recovery is presumed, while a large party

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of visitors might, on the other hand, cause heart failure in the sick person. The headman who sends the invitation to other villages merely directs it to other headmen, and does not stipulate how many visitors are expected. The party coming from each hamlet is organized by someone there related to the dying person; usually a male. These visitors may bring milk or other gifts when they come, and have to be fed by the family of the sick person during their visit. There is an element of bidding farewell to the dying, which is often expressed by Badagas with the belief that nobody should be alone when he dies. At night-time, therefore, the lamp must remain alight and all of the villagers sit up singing songs or listening to the radio. This event is known as *no:ka:patu*, "watching the sick." It could continue for as long as several months of a terminal illness, although with a reduced number of participants after the first few nights (Mörike 1857: 60).

Badagas believe no one should die beyond the boundaries of his village. In recent times the hold of this custom has been such that one hears of patients dangerously ill in a hospital whose relatives insist on bringing them home to die, a decision which certainly kills some people who might otherwise have hope of recovery. Nevertheless one former headman said that after a discussion about whether to bring a dying woman from the hospital, he was recently able to prevail with the argument that a life is more precious than any custom, and that to bring the woman home before she had either got better or died was tantamount to murder, since the monsoon weather would surely finish her off in the hamlet.

Shortly before death occurs a 25-paise coin (1/4 rupee, but originally a small gold coin of another value) must be dipped in clarified butter and given to the dying person, who should try to swallow it. This rite of *hana benne* ("coin butter") is done even for children and those dying in hospitals, as it is thought that a person cannot get to heaven without this coin to pay for the food, drink and tolls on his journey there, and the butter will give him strength for it (Gover 1871: 66; Tignous 1911: 119). That some people choke on the coin seems very likely, and instances of a person recovering after swallowing the coin are numerous enough that today only a small minority still follow this custom. As a less acceptable alternative, the buttered coin may be inserted in the mouth after death, or else wrapped in a cloth and tied to the dying man's arm (Grigg 1880: 227; Natesa Sastri 1892: 833; Schmidt 1894: 257).